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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 000892

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [IS](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#)
SUBJECT: SETTLERS LASH OUT AGAINST USG

REF: A. JERUSALEM 876
[1](#)B. JERUSALEM 689

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. ConGen contacts in West Bank settlements are uniformly angry at U.S. statements calling for a freeze in settlement expansion and the dismantling of outposts. Poloffs visited with a number of settler leaders who asserted that U.S. opposition to settlement activity "will push people towards extremism." One settler leader, while watching the President's June 4 speech, remarked to Poloff that U.S. pressure on outposts will "only damage the U.S.-Israel relationship." At least one prominent, long-standing contact told Poloffs that he will not meet again with ConGen officials until USG policies are "less hostile." Around 100 Israelis participated in a peaceful June 3 settler-organized demonstration against the ConGen, carrying banners declaring: "Obama: No you can't!" End summary.

Settlers Condemn USG Policies on
Settlement Expansion and Outposts

[1](#)2. (C) Poloffs met with settlers in all five settlement regions of the West Bank June 1-4. Prominent settlers, including co-founder of Kiryat Arba Elyakim Haetzni, head of local council at Kochav Hashachar Barry Schuman, rabbi of Givat Zeev Ari Kahn, rabbi and founder of Efrat Shlomo Riskin, and mayor of Ariel Ron Nachman, all condemned USG pressure on the GOI to freeze settlement expansion and dismantle outposts. They blamed this pressure for the recent spate of settler violence by their "impulsive youth" against Palestinians (ref A), though most condemned violence against Palestinians.

[1](#)3. (C) Elkana settler Mel Borenstein said the USG must "compromise" on settlement growth, or it "will push people towards extremism." Poloffs were meeting with Gush Etzion Regional Council Chairman Shaul Goldstein during President Obama's June 4 speech in Cairo. Goldstein remarked that he understands U.S. interests in the broader Middle East are not the same as Israel's, but he said Israel "should not sacrifice itself" to accommodate the U.S. He added that U.S. pressure for the removal of outposts "will only damage the U.S.-Israel relationship."

Settlers Organizing Petition and Lobbying Knesset

[1](#)4. (C) Deputy Yesha Council Chairman and Amcit Sara Elyash on June 3 called USG pressure "brutal," and said she plans to organize a petition by American-Israeli settlers to President Obama protesting his policies on settlements. Elyash claimed that it is "not right" for President Obama to be "making threats against Israel." Gush Etzion's Goldstein told

Poloffs on June 4 that he spent June 3 at the Knesset, telling Israeli MKs that he will not accept a settlement freeze in Gush Etzion. Goldstein said he will "fight" the GOI on this issue. Jordan Valley Regional Council Chairman David Elhayani told Poloffs on June 3 that he is lobbying Israeli MKs to avoid dismantlement of outposts in his region.

Yesha Council Chairman:

"There Is No Point In Meeting With You"

15. (C) Yesha Council Chairman Dani Dayan, a long-standing ConGen contact, briefly met with Poloffs on June 2 to say that he will refuse to meet with ConGen officers until USG policies are "less hostile," saying, "there is no point in meeting with you at this point; our interests are diametrically opposed." Dayan publicly commented on President Obama's June 4 speech, saying that the President "expressed positions that are contrary to our interests and the will of the voters of Israel; we cannot tolerate this."

Settlers Demonstrating Near ConGen: "We're Going to Protect the Land of Israel Like Lionesses"

16. (C) Around 100 Israelis participated in a peaceful June 3 demonstration opposite ConGen Post One, in opposition to negotiations on Jerusalem and U.S. policies on West Bank settlements. According to press reports, protest organizer Nadia Matar, of the pro-settlement organization "Women in Green", publicly stated, "Every hilltop and stone in the Land of Israel is like one of our children, and we're going to

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protect it like lionesses." (Note: Matar was recently in the news following a March 18 speech in a New York synagogue where she called for the assassination of Palestinian officials, including President Abbas. End note.) Protesters on June 3 held large banners proclaiming: "Obama: No You Can't," and "20 new settlements by 2010: Yes We Can."

WALLES